



# Maricopa County

## News Release

### Environmental Services Department

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### ***Warning: Unapproved Food Additive in Meat Products*** **Maricopa County Environmental Services warns the public to immediately discard these products**

During a recent inspection at a local *carnicería*, Maricopa County Environmental Services discovered an unapproved, food coloring agent being added to raw pork and beef products, including chorizo and marinated meat.

As a result of our initial investigation, the coloring agent in question, Cemix, was traced to a local distributor and it was further revealed that other local *carnicerías*/meat markets were also using this product. The product is known to be used for industrial colorant for concrete.

“Our department’s inspectors are working on removing products with this coloring agent from retailers, and consumers should know that if they bought these products from any of the identified locations, they should stop using them,” said John Kolman, director of the Maricopa County Environmental Services department. “We sent inspectors to survey more locations and try to isolate products with this unapproved food additive,” Kolman added.

In the meantime, this is an on-going investigation with the assistance of other state and federal agencies.

The establishments that have been found to be using products containing this unapproved food additive are:

#### **Carnicería el Camino**

3205 W. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ – (602) 278-8016

#### **Phoenix Farms Supermercado**

3353 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Ave., Phoenix – (602) 241-6292

1928 W. Buckeye Rd., Phoenix (602) 254-6382

-More-

*Warning: Adulterated Meat Products*

Maricopa County Environmental Services warns the public to immediately return these products to the establishments where purchased

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This list of Valley companies that could have possibly used these products may increase, since we have yet to determine the full distribution of this unapproved food additive.

Cemix contains two forms of iron oxide, which when ingested, has similar health effects to iron supplements like prenatal vitamins. If eaten in large quantities, iron oxide might cause abdominal discomfort, vomiting or diarrhea within about 6 hours, but no serious health effects.

“If it has been more than 6 hours and you feel fine, there’s very little risk of any health effects at all,” said Dr. Bob England, director of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health. “But it wasn’t intended for human consumption, not manufactured in a manner that would be considered appropriate for food production, so it is only prudent to not eat this stuff.”

For those individuals that may experience abdominal pain, vomiting and/or diarrhea within 6 hours of eating meat from these establishments it should pass, however, you may contact your healthcare provider. You may also call the Maricopa County Public Health Information Line at 602-747-7500 for assistance.

If consumers have questions regarding their purchased products, they should contact the establishment where their product was purchased.

For further information, you may contact Maricopa County Environmental Services at (602) 506-6616, or visit <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/>.

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